

A Resolution Affirming LGBTQ+ Persons

WHEREAS the dignity and rights of transgender and non-binary people in the United States have been increasingly threatened, especially by the passage in 2023 of 75 bills across 23 states, including Oklahoma; and

WHEREAS no fewer than 54 such bills have been proposed so far for the 2024 session of the Oklahoma Legislature; and

WHEREAS anti-LGBTQ+ policies and legislation and lack of access to affirming spaces, communities, and medical care contribute to poorer mental health and higher rates of considered and attempted suicide among LGBTQ+ young people; and

WHEREAS in addition to the above, stigmatization and negative media coverage contribute to higher rates of violence and murder, especially against transgender people of color; and

WHEREAS the United Methodist Baptismal Covenant calls us “to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves” (The Baptismal Covenant I, II, and IV); and

WHEREAS the Scriptures instruct us that we are not to withhold God’s love and mercy from any person based on perceived differences (Matthew 15:21-28, Acts 10:28); and

WHEREAS the Social Principles assert: “Primary for us is the gospel understanding that all persons are important—because they are human beings created by God and loved through and by Jesus Christ and not because they have merited significance” (*Book of Discipline* Par. 161); and

WHEREAS the Social Principles further assert: “We support the basic rights of all persons to equal access to housing, education, communication, employment, medical care, legal redress for grievances, and physical protection. We deplore acts of hate or violence against groups or persons based on race, color, national origin, ethnicity, age, gender, disability, status, economic condition, sexual orientation, gender identity, or religious affiliation” (*Book of Discipline* Par. 162):

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Oklahoma Conference of The United Methodist Church intentionally affirms, supports, advocates on the behalf of LGBTQ+ persons, and engages in ministry with all at-risk individuals regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Oklahoma Conference reaffirms its commitment to the Biblical mandates of hospitality to the stranger and love to our neighbors; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Oklahoma Conference urges its churches, committees, campus ministries, camps, and all other ministries to ensure their spaces are safe for every child of God; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Oklahoma Conference examines, confesses, and repents of its role in “othering” LGBTQ+ persons among many others of God’s children, whether through silence or action; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Oklahoma Conference calls upon every United Methodist to educate themselves about long-held prejudices against LGBTQ+ persons and acts of hate, harassment, and violence, and respond to them with acts of compassion and liberation.

RESOURCES

- “From drag bans to sports restrictions, 75 anti-LGBTQ bills have become law in 2023”, NBC: <https://www.nbcnews.com/nbc-out/out-politics-and-policy/75-anti-lgbtq-bills-become-law-2023-rcna124250>
- “2023 U.S. National Survey on the Mental Health of LGBTQ Young People”, The Trevor Project: https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2023/assets/static/05_TREVOR05_2023survey.pdf
- “Trans Lives & Positive Visibility”, HRC: <https://reports.hrc.org/trans-lives-positive-visibility>
- “The Epidemic of Violence Against the Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Community in the United States”, HRC: <https://reports.hrc.org/an-epidemic-of-violence-2023>
- “Dismantling a Culture of Violence”, HRC: <https://reports.hrc.org/dismantling-a-culture-of-violence>
- “Mapping Attacks on LGBTQ Rights in U.S. State Legislatures in 2024”, ACLU: <https://www.aclu.org/legislative-attacks-on-lgbtq-rights-2024?state=OK&impact=#map>